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Rathôpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Parable of the Chariot | S 35.198 (S:Be 35.239)
 Theme: The 3 good habits that bring happiness now and lead us to the path
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2012, 2019

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUMMARY

The **Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) is a short discourse where the Buddha lists 3 qualities that bring a Dharma practitioner happiness in this life itself, and that is the start of the path of awakening leading to arhathood. The 3 qualities are sense-restraint [§§3-6], moderation in food [§§7-9] and devotion to wakefulness [§§10-11]. The practice of sense-restraint is illustrated by the parable of the chariot [§4].

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RATHÔPAMA SUTTA TRIAD

1.2.1 Sense-restraint (*indriyesu gutta, dvāra*)

1.2.1.1 We will examine the teachings of **the Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) as 3 vital aspects of the Dharma-spirited **basic training** to gain the path of awakening, thus:

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| (1) <u>sense-restraint</u> | keeping the senses free from distraction | [1.2.1] |
| (2) <u>moderation in food</u> | the right diet, and cutting off food that distracts the mind | [1.2.3] |
| (3) <u>devotion to wakefulness</u> | keeping the mind alert during meditation, and mindful on emerging | [1.2.4] |

1.2.1.2 The Buddha gives the 1st quality or condition (*dhamma*) for happiness and spiritual progress as that of **sense-restraint** [§§3-6], that is, guarding the 6 sense-doors—the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind—from being distracted by either the very first *sign* of a sense-object or any of its *details*, once we start to look closer into it. Sense-restraint, then, is a kind of “early warning” habit of mindfulness, where any potentially unwholesome sense-experience is nipped in the bud before we are overwhelmed by any unwholesome effect.

1.2.1.3 **The purpose of sense-restraint** is neither to let any greed draw us into the experience nor hate push it away, nor doubt bore or confuse us with an object that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. When we feed the sense-object with *greed*, our latent tendency of **lust** grows; when we feed the object with *hate*, our latent tendency of **ill will** grows; when we feed the object with doubt or worldly indifference, our latent tendency of **ignorance** grows.

This 1st stage of meditative training is about keeping our senses free from distractions, from being drawn out and dissipated by our sense-experiences, the world.¹ The experience of meditation starts with the gradual letting go of our projected “sensing” of the world. In such a projective experience, we are seeing, as it were, only the surface of the world that are visual forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touches, and deluded by our virtual world of thoughts.

We are, as it were, closing the first 5 sense-doors—those of the physical senses—so that we experience only the 6th sense, **the mind** and its processes. Here, we examine, refine and, in due course, transcend our feelings (our affective reactions), perception (how we recognize realities), formations (how we deliberate morally or immorally), and consciousness (how we basically sense things). Meditation, then, is

¹ See **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

the overhauling of our mental apparatus so that it presents to us true reality with greater truth and beauty, clarity and joy.

1.2.1.4 The commentary on **the Putta,maṃsa Sutta** (S 12.63) says that the Buddha gives the teaching on the 4 kinds of food to show how just as food nourishes the body, all our feelings, willing and knowing (affective, conative and cognitive) aspects are *conditioned* (like a snake eating its own tail). This is the Buddha's strong warning to monastics since they have been receiving an abundance of gains and honours (*lābha,sakkāra*), and that some of the monks are not using their requisites with proper reflection.

The situation deteriorates to such a level that the Buddha declares giving this teaching as “**the 5th rule of defeat**” (*pañcama pārājika*). When a monastic knows no restraint towards gains and honours, they automatically fall from monkhood: they are spiritually defeated. To prevent this, he presents to the monastics the teaching that is “**a Dharma mirror**” or “mirror of the Dharma” (*dhamm'ādāsa*), that is, **self-restraint**.² Constantly reflecting on this teaching, they would use the 4 requisites—almsfood, robes, shelter and medical requisites—with restraint (*samvara*) and limits [strictly defined relationships] (*mariyāda*). (SA 2:102,1-103,20)³

1.2.2 The parable of the chariot

1.2.2.1 The chariot parable [§4] is a meditation metaphor to be read on two levels. The 1st level is that of sense-restraint. **The charioteer** is our attention, and **the thoroughbreds** (tamed well-bred horses) the various sense-consciousnesses; **the reins** are thinking, and **the whip** pondering; **the road** is sense-contacts, and **the level ground** wise consideration (which keeps us stable). This is our mindfulness practice, especially when we reflect on impermanence.

1.2.2.2 The 2nd level of the metaphor is that of deep meditation. **The charioteer** is our attention, and **the thoroughbreds** the meditating mind; **the reins** (in the left hand) are mindfulness, and **the whip** (in the right hand) clear comprehension; **the road** is the meditation method, and **the level ground** samadhi, including dhyana.

This is an analytical reflection of the chariot parable so that we understand what happens when we are mindful or when we meditate. We begin to understand how the bits and pieces of Dharma as teachings fit together to give us a bigger picture of true reality, and we see ourself as a connected part of this reality.

While the former aspect, the *analytical process*, is our process of knowing (*ñāṇa*), the latter aspect is a synthetical reflection on actually riding the chariot, where all the parts fit together as an experiential *whole*: this is the seeing (*dassana*) process of insight. These are the 2 aspects of the parable.

1.2.3 Moderation in food (*bhojane mattaññutā*)

1.2.3.1 Moderation in food refers to the right diet and the right amount. The “**right diet**” refers to taking food for the sake of *good health, strength* and *diligence* to keep up our spiritual practice. This is what we are reminded of in the reflection on food [§7]. We eat to live; we live to learn; we learn to know; we know to free ourself. Moderation in food keeps us to the middle way.

On a mundane level, “the middle way” refers to a healthy body as a support for a healthy mind by way of good meditation and a heart of alert calm and clarity. On a spiritual level, “**the middle way**” is the wholesome path of the 3 trainings: moral virtue, mental concentration and insight wisdom. In this

² Such a mirror is taught to Rāhula by way of self-reflection: **Amba,laṭṭhikā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 61,8), SD 3.10.

³ S 12.63 (SD 20.6). Also at SD 55.14 (1.1.2).

way, we have a **healthy mind in a healthy body** as we head for the path of awakening and streamwinning and beyond.

1.2.3.2 “The right amount” of food that we eat means knowing *when to stop eating*: this is the rule for renunciants. For the laity, this is clearly the practice on precept days and during retreats. “**Knowing when to stop**,” the Commentaries explain as “**grasping the sign in over-eating**” (*ati,bhōjane nimitta-g,-gāha*).⁴ This key expression refers to the awareness impending sufficiency of food taken so that we will stop taking any more, beyond which would be considered “over-eating.”

We can only notice the “sign in over-eating” when we eat mindfully. Basically, we feel a sense of hunger-free physical comfort. For this reason, good monastics, as a rule, **take their food mindfully and slowly**, a morsel of well-mixed meal, preference-free, one handful or spoonful at a time, chewing it properly; then, one takes another morsel, and so on. In this way, not only will we notice *the sign in over-eating*, but the food is well chewed, and well digested, contributing to good health.

In simple layman’s terms, this is called “stopping to eat before we feel full.” In practice, we should train ourselves to stop eating at least a few mouthfuls before we are full, as advised in **the Sāriputta Thera,gāthā**, thus:

<p><i>Cattāro pañca ālope abhutvā⁵ udakaṃ pive alam phāsu,vihārāya pahit’attassa bhikkhuno</i></p>	<p>With four or five morsels more to eat, he but drinks water. this is enough for living comfortably for a monk of resolute mind.</p>	<p>Tha 983⁶</p>
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1.2.3.4 The practice of “**cutting off**” food before we are actually full means that we should consume only just enough to kill our hunger, which also signifies sufficient food for our good health.⁷ Beyond that, taking more food than we need—especially when we are devoted to a meditative life—means that we are accumulating the conditions for sloth and torpor. We will be overwhelmed with mental distraction preventing us from proper meditation and building up indolence. This is what is clearly stated in the sutta reflection of meal-taking⁸ [§7].

Food (*āhāra*), then, should contribute to our health and diligence in the spiritual life. We are, however, sustained not merely by material food, but also by what we “feed” our feelings, our motivations and how we know things—how we condition the affective, the conative and the cognitive aspects of our being. Hence, there are 4 kinds of food that we should know about and properly manage. [2]

1.2.3.5 The Vinaya proscribes monastics, especially forest monks, from taking certain kinds of food, especially **the 10 kinds of prohibited meat**. These are the flesh of human beings, elephants, horses, dogs,

⁴ DA 3:780; MA 1:284 = SA 3:166 = AA 1:50 = ItA 2:180; VbhA 273.

⁵ *Abhutvā*, absol of *abhujjati*, “he does not eat.” See Tha:N 261 n983. Comy: “Therein, **abhutvā** means that, not eating **the 4 or 5 morsels** of solid food, withholding that much food, he should drink water. For this is one who is easily contented” (*Tattha abhutvā ti cattāro vā pañca vā ālope kabaḷe abhujjivā tattakassa āhārassa okāsaṃ thapetvā pāṇiyam piveyya. Ayañ hi āhāre sallahuka,vutti*) (ThaA 3:99).

⁶ **Tha 983** qu at DA 3:778; MA 1:282; SA 2:107, 3:165; AA 1:47; ItA 1:43, 2:179; SnA 2:494; ThaA 3:99; Miln 407 (with Tha 982), J 255/2:294 (with Tha 982); Nm 2:345; Dhs 404; VbhA 270. Cf A 6.19,6/3:304 f, 8.73,8/4:318 f. See SD 32.6 (3.2.4). On stopping to eat before we are full, see **Doṇa,pāka Sutta** (S 3.13) + SD 37.13 (3.2.4). On overcoming gluttony, see SD 37.13.

⁷ On food and health, see **Subha S** (D 10,1.2) SD 40.13 = **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,1.2), SD 13.

⁸ On moderate eating, see **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,7.2), SD 38.1; **Bhaddāli S** (M 65,2), SD 56.2; **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,9), SD 10.13; **Kiṭṭa,giri S** (M 70,4), SD 11.1; **Āma,gandha S** (Sn 2.2), SD 4.24 (3.4.1); SD 32.2 (5.1); SD 37.13 (1.2, 2.2).

snakes, lions, tigers, leopards, bears and hyenas (V 1:218-220). These kinds of meat should never be offered to monastics, and they would not accept such offerings.

Human flesh is prohibited on obvious humane grounds against cannibalism. Elephants and horses, besides being large and intelligent animals, are the rajah's emblems and means of defence. Meat of dogs and snakes are regarded as loathsome. Dogs and cats (and other household pets) have close karmic connections with us: in future existences, the roles of the killer and the eaten, will be reversed, as long as the conditions persist.

The others are fierce jungle animals that may be able to sense and attack those who have taken the flesh of their kind. Not taking meat is a wholesome gesture of respect for life, and also contributes to good health. We can begin by consuming ever less meat, and taking more vegetarian food in a healthy manner that helps us in our Dharma living.⁹

1.2.3.6 A very effective mindfulness practice to help us cut down on unhealthy eating and understand the true nature of food is that of **the perception of loathsomeness in food** (*āhāre paṭikkūla,saññā*). Buddhaghosa, in his **Visuddhi,magga**, gives a detailed exposition on **the perception of repulsiveness of food**.¹⁰ He details the practice in terms of the mediaeval background of Sri Lanka of his times. Of special interest is this passage he attributes to the Ancients (*porāṇa*), the early elders:

The food and drink, eaten and drunk at a great price:
They enter by one door, but ooze out through nine!

The food and drink, eaten and drunk at a great price,
They are eaten in company, only to be voided in secrecy!

The food and drink, eaten and drunk at a great price,
They are eaten with delight, but voided in disgust!

The food and drink, eaten and drunk at a great price,
A single night will make everything rot! [Vism 11.23/346; untraced]¹¹

A simple form of the loathsomeness of food—taught in **the (Chakka) Maraṇa,sati Sutta 1** (A 6.19)—is to reflect on death as we eat, chewing a single morsel or mouthful, we should reflect how death may come to us at any time.¹²

1.2.4 Devotion of wakefulness (*jāgariyānuyoga*)

1.2.4.1 The 3 teachings of **the Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198)—sense-restraint, moderation in food, and devotion to wakefulness—are the supporting conditions for Dharma-spirited meditative training [1.2.1.1]. **Sense-restraint** keeps our senses free from distraction [1.2.1-1.2.2]; **moderation in food** readies our body and clears our mind for mental cultivation [1.2.3].

1.2.4.2 In the early stages of meditation, we gently let go of all our physical sensing by simply taking them to be just as they are, neither attending to their sign nor their details. Technically, this means we neither think of it (1st thought) nor ponder over it (keep on thinking of it). It's like we are standing on the

⁹ On meatless diet and meat-eating, see **Āma,gandha S** (Sn 2.2) + SD 4.24 (3.1.4).

¹⁰ See SD 20.6 (3); Vism 11.1-26/341-347.

¹¹ As at SD 20.6 (3.2).

¹² A 6.19/3:306 (SD 48.11).

pavement of a **busy road with traffic** moving back and forth before us. We do not follow any of the vehicles, but only know they are coming and going, left and right. When there is a clear break in the traffic flow, we cross safely over to the other side.

Psychologically, whether the sense-object that arises is desirable, undesirable or neither, we see it simply as being **impermanent**, *changing, becoming other*, that is, as rising and falling away. Hence, we see it as it really is. When we do this habitually so that we see it ever clearer, **insight wisdom** arises. In due course, this mental habit will fruit in our reaching the path of awakening as a streamwinner in this life itself.¹³

1.2.4.3 In other words, sense-restraint and moderation in food are the bases for good meditation practice and spiritual progress. By this is meant that we naturally direct our attention away from the “world” of physical senses and keeping it healthy and ready to focus on the mind, which frees itself to reach the heights of joy, peace and clarity.

2 The 4 kinds of food

2.1 “ALL BEINGS ARE SUSTAINED BY FOOD”

2.1.1 “Food” as a teaching set

2.1.1.1 Food or nutriment (*āhāra*), in the broadest sense, nourishes (feeds and fuels) everything connected with the body or the mind. In this sense, an ancient formula says: “**All beings are sustained by food**” (*sabbe sattā āhāra-ṭṭhitikā*) [2.1.1.2]. In this sense, all kinds of existence—physical, affective, conative and cognitive—arise from the conditions that feed and fuel them. These can be said to be the 4 most basic kinds of conditionality taught in early Buddhism—this is the “one” truth that underpins all realities.

The 4 kinds of food are edible or material food, food as sense-contact, food as mental volition, and food as consciousness [2.1.2]. Of these 4, only the 1st comes from outside, while the other 3 seem to be self-sustaining in the sense of processing a conditional cycle of causes and effects—a snake feeding on its own tail (the uroboros).¹⁴

- (1) **Material food** comprises solids and liquids, coarse and fine, which nourishes the body.
- (2) **Sense-contact** nourishes pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings.
- (3) **Volition** nourishes actions through the 3 doors of body, speech and mind.
- (4) **Consciousness** nourishes name-and-form, that is, the mind and its “nominated”¹⁵ (projected) objects.

2.1.1.2 The teaching on “food” is the answer to the 1st question of the “boy’s question” (*kumāra, pañha*):¹⁶ “What is called the 1” (*eka nāma kiṃ*): “**All beings are sustained by food**” [2.1.1.1].¹⁷ This “1” truth summarizes the conditionality from which suffering arises, and the key practice to deal with this is

¹³ See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

¹⁴ On the uroboros, see SD 23.3 (1); SD 49.2 (4.3.2.3).

¹⁵ “Nominate” is here used in its literal sense, “to give a name to, to name,” in the sense of “conceiving” or projecting ideas onto sense-experiences. In the unawakened, to “experience” is to name what each of the senses *does*.

¹⁶ These are the 10 questions by way of numerical items from 1 to 10 (“What is called the 1?” and so on), relating to the key teachings that a novice (*sāmaṇera*) should carefully learn about (Khp 1).

¹⁷ Khp 4/2. For tr: Khp:Ñ 2; comy KhpA:Ñ 78-94. See also A:W 5:33.

moderation in food [§§7-8] and sense-restraint [§§3-6]. This key teaching on **food** should be “fully understood” (*abhiññeyya*)—by way of knowing it, scrutinizing it and abandoning it.¹⁸ [2.2.1]

2.1.2 The 4 kinds of food¹⁹

2.1.2.1 The 4 kinds of food (*āhāra*) or nutriment (and what understanding each overcomes, and their fruits) as taught by the Buddha in **the Putta,maṃsa Sutta** (S 12.63), SD 20.6:²⁰

1. material food	<i>kabaliṅkār'āhāra</i>	—	lust for the 5 cords of sense-pleasure	non-returning
2. contact	<i>phass'āhāra</i>	—	the 3 kinds of feelings	arhathood
3. mental volition	<i>saṅkhār'āhāra</i>	—	the 3 kinds of craving	arhathood
4. consciousness	<i>viññāṇ'āhāra</i>	—	name-and-form	arhathood

2.1.2.2 To assist our spiritual exercise in seeing **the true nature of “food,”** the Sutta dramatically highlights the true nature of such foods with these comparisons:

(1) material food	should eat it as if eating our only son’s (or beloved’s) flesh
(2) food that is contact	should be regarded like a flayed or hideless cow fearing pests biting it
(3) mental volition	is like 2 strong persons forcing us over a fiery coal-pit
(4) consciousness	is like a thief given 300 strokes of the spear ²¹

2.1.3 How food nourishes us

2.1.3.1 The commentary on **the (Nidāna) Āhāra Sutta** (S 12.11)²² says that the 4 kinds of food are the supports (*paccaya*) for conditions called nutriments (*āhāra*) because they feed or nourish (*āharanti*, “(they) bring about”) their own effects (SA 2:22,26 f). Although there are other conditions for being or existence, only these 4 are called “food” because they serve as special conditionality (cycle of causes and effects) for individual life-continuity (*ajjhattika,santatiyā visesa,paccayattā*). (SA 2:25,13)

2.1.3.2 Basically, **material food** (*kabaliṅkāra āhāra*) is a special condition for the physical body of those beings who subsist on edible food. In the mental body, **contact** is the special condition for feeling, **mental volition** for consciousness, and **consciousness** for name-and-form. As a set, we can refer to them as “nutriments,” also *āhāra* in Pāli.

2.2 FULLY UNDERSTANDING THE 4 KINDS OF FOOD

2.2.1 The 3 kinds of full understanding

2.2.1.1 In **the Putta,maṃsa Sutta** (S 12.63), the Buddha exhorts us to reflect on taking **material or edible food** (*kabaliṅkāra āhāra*)²³ as if we are eating our own son’s (or loved one’s) flesh. The meaning

¹⁸ SD 20.6 (2.4).

¹⁹ This study on the 4 kinds of food (*āhāra*) goes into some technical details. For a more general intro, see a similar study in the intro to **Putta,maṃsa S** (S 12,63): SD 20.6 (2). If you are new to this topic, you should first study the latter.

²⁰ On the 4 kinds of food, see **Putta,maṃsa S** (S 12.63) + SD 20.6 (2.2 + 2.3).

²¹ S 12.63 + SD 20.6 (1.2). See also **(Nidāna) Āhāra Sutta** (S 12.11/2:11 f), SD 76.1.

²² S 12.11/2:11 f (SD 76.1).

²³ On *kabaliṅkāra*, see SD 20.6 (2.2.3.2).

here is that that flesh comes from a living being that has died. Just as we feel an attachment to our son or beloved, that being, too, loved its own life. Hence, we should not take this lightly.

Hence, we should cut down on taking meat, and take more non-meat food instead as far as possible. Basically, this means that we should not be attached to food, since it is the root of lust. Hence, declares the Buddha, when material food is fully understood, **lust for the 5 cords of sense-pleasures** (taking pleasure in physical pleasures) is fully understood. (S 12.63,4-11)

The commentary on **the Putta,maṃsa Sutta** (S 12.63) explains that **material food** should be fully understood by way of these 3 levels of full understanding:²⁴

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| (1) the full understanding of <u>the known</u> ; | <i>ñāta,pariññā</i> | [2.2.1.2] |
| (2) the full understanding by <u>scrutinization</u> ; and | <i>tiraṇa,pariññā</i> | [2.2.1.5] |
| (3) the full understanding as <u>abandonment</u> . ²⁵ | <i>pahīna,pariññā</i> | [2.2.1.6] |

2.2.1.2 In the case of (1), the full understanding of the known, a practitioner understands, thus: “This **material food** is ‘form with nutritive essence as the eighth.’²⁶ This impinges on the tongue-sensitivity (taste, texture and temperature), which is dependent on the 4 great elements. Thus, nutriment, tongue-sensitivity and the 4 elements—these are the form aggregate.²⁷ The full understanding of the known in terms of material food, in uprooting craving, leads to **non-returning**. (SA 2:109,24-30)

2.2.1.3 The commentary on **the Putta,maṃsa Sutta** (S 12.63), then, explains **the full understanding of contact** in the same way as for *material food*, except that **contact** (*phassa*) is taken as the starting point for the discernment of the 5 aggregates. When contact is fully understood, the 3 feelings are fully understood since they are *rooted in contact and associated with it*.

Technically, the sensation of **feelings** (*vedanā*) involves *contact, feeling, perception, volition and consciousness*. These form the contact pentad (*phassa pañcaka*). When they arise—when we sense something—we should discern this to be basically the 4 mental aggregates. In fact, these 5 are simply “name-and-form.” When an object impinges on one of our senses, one of the 3 feelings arises. We perceive or recognize this (relating it to some past experience) and often wilfully react to it (we like it, dislike it, or ignore it) (volition). In this way, we feed our consciousness, building it up in terms of craving.

2.2.1.4 The lesson here is that we should see all our **sense-impressions** (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) as potentially able to bring mental pain. When we see it as pleasant, we are likely to desire more of it; and when we see it as unpleasant, we are likely to reject it; and we tend to be bored with or ignore neutral feelings. In this way, we feed our latent tendencies of lust and repulsion. (S 12.63,-12-14)

To help us reflect on the true nature of feelings, the Buddha gives **the parable of the flayed or hideless cow** (S 12.63,13). Just as a hideless cow fears being bitten or eaten by the creatures lurking where she stands, a monk would not wish to be honoured and venerated, or to be massaged, rubbed, given hot baths, etc, seeing the danger of being devoured by defilements—creatures rooted in the nutriment that is contact—will have no desire towards contact in the 3 planes of existence.²⁸

²⁴ S 12.63/2:97-100 (SD 20.6); SA 2:109,24-111,12. See Vism 20.3-5/606 f (Vism:Ñ 704-706).

²⁵ See SD 20.6 (2.4).

²⁶ *Oj’atthamaka,rūpāni*, an Abhidhamma term for the simplest component of matter, comprising the 4 elements (earth, water, fire, wind), colour, smell, taste and nutritive essence (*oja*); see Vism 341,9; Vism:Ñ 680,31; Nyanatiloka 1953: ojā; BDict: ojā.

²⁷ MA 1:209,16-19 = SA 2:25,21-24; NcA 88,6-11; PmA 1:109,27-110,9.

²⁸ “The 3 planes of existence” (*te,bhūmaka*) are the sense-world, the form world and the formless world. SA 2:-111,14-30; MA 1:211,20-23, 213,38-213,2; ItA 2:10,33-11,3. On the parable of the hideless cow, see SD 20.6 (2.3.2).

Hence, when we see all such sensations (sense-impressions) as being conditioned and impermanent, we are less likely to react to them with *craving* (like, dislike, ignoring). In fact, we should train ourself to see them as dependently arising in direct and reverse order. Thus seeing *name-and-form* with its conditions according to true reality, *the material food* is fully understood by **the full understanding of the known**. Such a full understanding can lead up to **non-returning**. (SA 2:111,14-30)

2.2.1.5 Next, (2) we should see **the 3 characteristics** (impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, nonself) in that very same name-and-form, exploring it by way of the 7 contemplations, thus:

contemplating formations as:

- (1) impermanent
- (2) suffering
- (3) non-self
- (4) revulsion
- (5) dispassion
- (6) cessation
- (7) relinquishment

we abandon:

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|------------------------------|--------------------|
| the perception of permanence | <i>nicca,saññā</i> |
| the perception of pleasure | <i>sukha,saññā</i> |
| the perception of self | <i>atta,saññā</i> |
| delighting | <i>nandī</i> |
| lust | <i>rāga</i> |
| arising | <i>samudaya</i> |
| clinging | <i>ādāna</i> |

(Vism 20.4/607)

The key practice is the very first one: **the perception of impermanence**. We should not be wondering whether we are contemplating on any of the rest, but just focus on the first, which is the basis for the contemplating of the rest. In fact, as noted, these 7 contemplations are all based on one or other of the 3 characteristics: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and nonself.

As our *perception of impermanence* becomes more established in urgency and clarity, we will notice aspects of the other contemplations flashing before us. As we hold on to the sign of impermanence, these flashes of insight become steadier as we let go of our views about them. In due course, here and now, we will fully master the true nature of “food” by **full understanding by scrutinization**. (SA 2:110,10)

2.2.1.6 (3) **Full understanding as abandonment** is accomplished when food is fully understood as the lust for the 5 cords of sensual pleasure (that is, the pleasures of the 5 physical senses). This is fully understood by:

- (1) the singlefold full understanding (*eka,pariññā*), namely, that the craving for tastes (*rasa*)²⁹ arising at the tongue-door is the same craving that arises at all 5 sense-doors;
- (2) the complete and full³⁰ understanding (*sabba,pariññā*), namely, that lust for all the 5 cords of sensual pleasure arises even towards a single morsel of food placed in the almsbowl (for food arouses desire in all the 5 senses);
- (3) the root full understanding (*mūla,pariññā*), namely, that *food* (nutriment) is the “root” (the basic condition) for the arising of all the 5 kinds of sensual lust, since sensual desire proliferates when we are well fed. (SA 2:110,12-111,6)

This full understanding as abandonment refers to the cutting off all desire and lust for **name-and-form** (how we experience sense-objects and “make sense” of them by naming them). Hence, **the Putta-maṃsa Sutta** (S 12.65,11.2) declares: when the nature of material food is fully understood, “There is no

²⁹ This is naturally reflected in the common expression, to have “a taste” for something, ie, to be drawn to a pleasure, often attended by a great knowledge about it.

³⁰ “Complete” refers to every kind of lust; “full” refers to the total understanding of a particular one.

fetter by which the noble disciple would be bound so that he would return to this world again”: this is the path of **non-returning**.³¹ However, when we develop insight into the 5 aggregates by way of these very same forms, etc, we can reach even **arhathood** itself. (SA 2:111,91-2)

2.3 THE FOOD THAT IS MENTAL VOLITION

2.3.1 Feeding the will

2.3.1.1 The 3rd kind of food that feeds our being is “**mental volition**” (*saṅkhārā*), which is here a psychological term for our volition or intention (*cetanā*). Although we think we have a “will” or “free will,” the drive to do this or be that, the reality is that we are *not free* at all, but are powerfully driven by **the 3 kinds of craving** (*taṇhā*):

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| (1) craving for sensual pleasures | <i>kāma,taṇhā</i> | the lust for the 5 cords of sensual pleasures [2.2.1.6] |
| (2) craving for existence | <i>bhava,taṇhā</i> | the lust for existence, especially eternal life |
| (3) craving for annihilation | <i>vibhava,taṇhā</i> | the lust for non-existence, eg, this-life materialism |

Basically, **the craving for sensual pleasures**—the desire for the pleasures of the 5 physical senses—keeps us in the sense-world as sense-world devas, humans, animals, pretas and hell-beings.³² **The craving for existence** is basically “the desire to be,” rooted in the eternalist view (*sassata,diṭṭhi*), that things can or should last forever.

When we have a theistic view (belief in a God-idea), this is the notion of some kind of **eternal life** (which is logically and naturally impossible). More broadly, especially in meditation-based views, this is the desire for a blissful “fine-form” (*rūpa,loka*) and formless (*arūpa,loka*) divine existence as long-lived gods. Although this is possible, no matter how long we live, all life must reach its end.

The craving for annihilation feeds the minds of those with the belief that this is our one and only life, and that the body and soul exist as one: this is known as the annihilationist view (*uccheda,diṭṭhi*). This is also the wrong view that when we die, we cease to exist, without any karma or rebirth involved. Such a view entails serious moral problems since we seem not to be accountable for any of our actions, good or bad.³³

2.3.1.2 The 3 kinds of craving should be properly and fully understood. It is vital for us to fully understand them because craving is the root of mental volition: all our intentions, good and bad, are driven by craving. It is like being a concert pianist: we would not be a good performer if we need to think about all our bodily movements as we play the piano. A true musical artist is one who plays *naturally and masterfully* as if the piano were a seamless extension of oneself.

A spiritually attained practitioner is one who naturally does good, is good, without being driven by any craving (like, dislike or nonchalance), but always moved with joy and wisdom. Here, then, this full understanding of mental volition leads us as far as **arhathood**. (SA 2:113,5-10)

2.3.2 The parable of the burning coal-pit

2.3.2.1 The Putta,māmsa Sutta (S 12.65) illustrates the nature of this 3rd kind of food, mental volitions, by the **parable of the fiery coal-pit**, thus:

³¹ See SD 20.6 (2.5.1).

³² See **Pañca,gati S** (A 9.68), SD 2.20.

³³ See **Dhamma.cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,6), SD 1.1; SD 53.38 (1.2.3).

Suppose, bhikshus, there were a coal-pit deeper than a man's height, full of glowing coals, flameless and smokeless. Now, there is a man, desiring to live, not desiring to die, desiring happiness, loathing suffering. Then two strong men seize him by both his arms and drag him towards the fiery coal-pit.³⁴ Now, the man's intention would be to be far away from it, his wish would be to be far away from it, his task would be to be far away from it.³⁵ (S 12.63,16), SD 20.6

2.3.2.2 The coal-pit represents the cycle of existence with its 3 planes [2.2.1.4]; **the man wanting to live**, the foolish worldling attached to the cycle; **the two strong men**, wholesome and unwholesome karma, that is, mental volitions. When they **grab** the man by both arms and drag him towards the pit, this is like the worldling's accumulation of karma; for the accumulated karma **drags** along a rebirth. The **pain** from falling into the charcoal pit is like the suffering of the cycle.

2.4 THE FOOD THAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS

2.4.1 The role of consciousness

2.4.1.1 In our study of the 4 kinds of food [2.1.3], we have so far briefly examined our physical being (the lust for the 5 cords of sensual pleasure) that is fed and built by **material food** [2.2.1.1]; and our mental being, that is, the affective process, fed by **contact** (the 3 kinds of feeling), and the conative process driven by **mental volition** (the 3 kinds of craving).

The 4th and last kind of food is the stage at which all these 3 kinds of food nourish us as an integral being, as a person.³⁶ This 4th and last aspect is the cognitive process or *consciousness* as the food or support for **name-and-form**, how "conditioned by consciousness there is name-and-form"³⁷ (*viññāṇa, pacca-yā nāma, rūpam*) (SA 2:113,30) [2.4.2].

2.4.1.2 The "naming" aspects are what we call "the mind" has 3 terms: *citta, mano* and *viññāṇā*. Often, these words appear together as synonyms.³⁸ When these 3 terms are differentiated **mind** is designated:³⁹

³⁴ This sentence is part of a popular canonical imagery: **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12), as an imagery for hell (M 12,-37/1:74); **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36), pains from strenuous meditation (M 36,25/1:244) = **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra S** (M 85,-23/2:93) = **Saṅgārava S** (M 100,22/2:212); **Potaliya S** (M 54), on the dangers of sense-pleasures (M 54,18/1:365); **Māgandiya S** (M 75), on the painfulness of sense-pleasures (M 75,15/1:506-508); **Anātha, piṇḍik'ovāda S** (M 143), on his bodily pains (M 143,4/3:259) = **Chann'ovāda S** (M 144,5/3:264 = **Channa S** S 35.87/4:57); **Putta, maṃsa S** (S 12.63) on the pains of mental volitions (S 12.63.16/2:99 f); **Dukkha, dhamma S** (S 35.244) on how to regard sense-pleasures (S 35.244,5/4:188 f); **Phagguna S** (A 6.56) on his bodily pains (A 6.56,1/3:380); **Dhammika S: abrahmacariyam parivajjayeyya, aṅgāra, kāsūṃ jalitam eva viññū**, "Let the wise avoid celibacy like a fiery coal-pit" (Sn 396). Cf **Sumedhā Thī: aṅgāra, kāsū, sadisā, agha, mūlaṃ bhayaṃ vadho**, "(sense-pleasures are) like a fiery coal-pit, fearful, murderous roots of evil" (Thī 491) & **aṅgāra, karṣūpamā** (Mvst 3.149); both of which are used in connection with women.

³⁵ See Intro (2.3.3).

³⁶ On what constitutes a "person," according to early Buddhism, see **The person in Buddhism** (SD 29.6b).

³⁷ See SD 5.26 (1.4.1; 10.5).

³⁸ On *citta, mano, viññāṇa*, see **Assutava S 1** (S 12.61,4+8 with monkey simile), SD 20.2; **Assutava S 2** (S 12.61,-4+7), SD 20.3. The 3 discerned, see SD 17.8a (12), esp (12.5.4) summary.

³⁹ Due to the versatility and fluidity of Pali, esp in the suttas, "mind," "mentality," "consciousness" can apply just as well to *citta, mano, viññāṇa* (although in the last, we are used to its sense as "consciousness," which suggests that it is the oldest of the 3). On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2; 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4).

- as **mind** it is called **citta** because it “thinks” (*cinteti*),⁴⁰ “builds up” (*cinoti*) wholesome and unwholesome states (in a self-continuity);⁴¹
- as **mentality** it is called **mano** because it measures, examines, minds, knows (*manute*, “minding,”⁴² *manate*, “minds”;⁴² *manatīti*, “measures,”⁴³ *manayatīti*, “causes to measure,”⁴⁴ *munātīti*, “knows”⁴⁵), and
- as **consciousness** it is called **viññāṇa** because it discriminates (*vijānāti*) among sensory stimuli.⁴⁶

Hence, in some contexts, *citta* is “thought,” *mano* “mind,” and *viññāṇa* “consciousness.”⁴⁷ These are not different minds, but different *functions* of our versatile mind in its conative role, affective role and cognitive role respectively.

2.4.1.3 Name-and-form is fully understood when consciousness is fully understood [2.1.2] because it is rooted in consciousness and arises along with it.⁴⁸ By way of consciousness, too, the teaching is carried as far as arhathood. (SA 2:113,12-34)

The Putta.maṃsa Sutta (S 12.63) illustrates consciousness with **the parable of the thief** being punished for his crime by being beaten with the flat of spears 100 times three times a day.⁴⁹ The Sutta commentary explains that the king represents karma; the criminal, the worldling; the 300 spears-strokes, the rebirth-consciousness (past, present and future). The time the king gives his command is like when the worldling is driven towards rebirth by King Karma. The pain from being struck by the spear is like the resultant suffering in the course of existence once we are reborn.

2.4.2 Consciousness and craving

2.4.2.1 How does material food feed us? As soon as **material food** is placed in the mouth, it brings forth the form octad with nutritive essence as the 8th (*oj’atṭhamaka,rūpāni*) (which is an Abhidhamma term for the simplest group of matter); the food that is **contact** brings forth the 3 kinds of feeling; the food that is **mental volition** brings forth the 3 kinds of existence; and the food that is **consciousness** brings forth name-and-form on the occasion of rebirth.

⁴⁰ NettA:Be 177,13 *cintetīti cittaṃ*.

⁴¹ NettA:Be 177,13 *attano santānaṃ cinotīti cittaṃ*, “It builds up the continuity of self; hence, it is *citta*.”

⁴² ItA 1:99,16 *manate vijānātīti mano*; DhsA 123,18-19, PmA 1:85,5-9 *manute ... vijānāti ... nāliyā minamāno viya mahātulāya vā dhārayamāno viya vā* (PmA adds *manati jānāti*, “it measures, knows,” ...) *ārammaṇaṃ jānāti*, “it minds, ... discerns, ... like measuring by the *nāli* (a measuring tube) or balancing by a great weight, (the mind) knows the object.”

⁴³ ItA 1:99,16 *manatīti* (Ee); NcA 72,32; Dhs §17 :: DhsA 123,17 vl *manute* [prec].

⁴⁴ VbhA 45,17 *manayatīti mano*.

⁴⁵ ItA 1:99,16 f (Be Ce); NmA 1:168,7; PmA 1:79,19.

⁴⁶ M 1:292,29 *vijānāti vijānātīti ... , tasmā viññāṇan’ti vuccatīti*; S 3:87,17 *vijānātīti ... tasmā viññāṇan’ti vuccatī*; UA 41,29; ItA 2:64,6 *viññāṇan’ti te bhūmikaṃ kusalādi,cittaṃ*, “*Viññāṇa* is the mind of the 3 planes that is wholesome(, unwholesome, neutral); NmA 1:23,18, 2:291,4; NcA 72,33; PmA 1:79,19, 89,31; DhsA 123,17, 141,18; VbhA 135,23.

⁴⁷ The terms as synonyms, see **Assutava S 1** (S 12.61,4+8 with monkey simile), SD 20.2; **Assutava S 2** (S 12.61,4+7), SD 20.3. As 3 functions (*viññāṇa*, *mano*, *citta*), see SD 17.8a (12), esp (12.5.4) summary.

⁴⁸ On **nāma,rūpa**, see SD 17.1a (4.3.1); in the 5 aggregates (*khandha*), see SD 17.1a (4); SD 17.2a (12); in *paṭicca,samuppāda*, see (**Paṭicca,samuppāda**) **Vibhaṅga S** (S 12.2,11) n, SD 5.15.

⁴⁹ S 12.63,20-24 (SD 20.6).

2.4.2.2 According to the **(Nidāna) Āhāra Sutta** (S 12.11), the 4 kinds of food have **craving** as their source (*nidāna*). Its commentary explains that as soon as rebirth begins, these 4 kinds of food comprising our individual existence (*atta, bhava*) as a sentient being, should be understood to have arisen by way of prior craving (*purima, tanhā*), the craving of the previous life that generated the rebirth. In simple terms: our past karmic store of craving continues generating itself in a new present life.

How does this occur? At the moment of rebirth (*paṭisandhi-k, khane*), there is **nutriment** (*ojā*)⁵⁰ produced within our arisen physical form. This is the karmically acquired material food (physical nourishment) arising from prior craving. Then, the contact and volition associated with rebirth-consciousness, and that consciousness itself, are respectively the karmically generated nutriments of contact, mental volition, and consciousness arising from the prior craving.

In this way, at the time of rebirth, the nutriments (the foods) arise from prior craving. As at rebirth, so, too, they arise subsequently with the first continuity-consciousness (*bhavaṅga, citta*), in the same manner.

The commentarial explanation of how craving brings about the 4 kinds of food goes on to be somewhat circuitous. A simpler explanation, in keeping with the suttas, is that craving (*tanhā*) keeps beings in a constant struggle to obtain physical and mental foods, both in the present life and in future lives.⁵¹

2.4.2.3 In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, food is further discussed in the following Suttas:⁵²

S 12.11	(Nidāna) Āhāra Sutta	The 4 kinds of food arise from craving	SD 76.1
S 12.12	Moliya Phagguna Sutta	food from the perspective of non-self	SD 20.5
S 12.31	Bhūta Sutta	the “food” of being: its arising and its ending	SD 83.21
S 12.63	Putta,maṃsa Sutta	the 4 kinds of food and their true nature	SD 20.6
S 12.64	Atthi,rāga Sutta	lust for food brings on suffering	SD 26.10

Āhāra used in a broader sense of “special condition,”⁵³ without reference to the 4 kinds of food is discussed in the following Suttas:

S 46.51	(Bojjhaṅga) Āhāra Sutta	feeding/starving hindrances and awakening-factors	SD 7.15
S 55.31-33	Abhisāṇḍa Suttas 1-3	the 4 streams of merit as food for true happiness	
A 10.61	(Āhāra) Avijjā Sutta	conditions giving rise to ignorance and to liberation	SD 31.10

3 *Yoni* and its uses

3.1 *YONI C’ASSA ĀRADDHĀ HOTI ĀSAVĀNAṀ KHAYĀYA* [§1]

3.1.1 Its meaning

This stock sentence is found in a number of suttas and explained in the Commentaries. The commentaries on the **Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) and the **(Catukka) Padhāna Sutta** (A 4.71) explain the above sentence as follows:

⁵⁰ *Ojā* usu refers to “divine food, ambrosia” which endows the gods with longevity. Here, it is simply used as a synonym of “food” (*āhāra*). See BDict: ojā.

⁵¹ SA 2:27,34-29,26. On the conditioning role of **food** (technically, the “nutriment condition,” *āhāra, paccaya*), see **Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha**: Abhs 8.23 (Abhs:BRS 319).

⁵² For general notes on the 4 kinds of food, see Vism 11.1-3/341,7-18. Nyanaponika, “The four nutriments of life” (1981, 2006 digital), gives an anthology of relevant suttas with comys. For other related suttas, see SD 20.6 (1.3).

⁵³ See also SD 7.15 (1.3).

- “And there is sure cause for its fulfilment (namely, the destruction of the influxes,” *kāraṇañ c’assa paripuṇṇaṃ yeva hoti* (SA 3:22,20 f = AA 3:106,19);
- “And there is cause for its certain fulfilment,” *kāraṇañ c’assa paripuṇṇaṃ paggaḥitaṃ* (AA 3:412,15).

3.1.2 The meanings of *yoni*

3.1.2.1 *Yoni* (sometimes *yoni*), literally, refers to the womb, uterus, vulva, vagina, the female organs of generation (SED), and, we must add, the female urinary tract. The commentary on **the Apanṇaka Paṭi-pada Sutta** (A 3.16),⁵⁴ for example, broadly explains *yoni* as a “name” for “the urinary tract, a cause, a part of the aggregates” (*khandha,koṭṭhāsassa’pi kāraṇassa’pi passāva,magassa’pi nāmaṃ*).⁵⁵

Sometimes, *yoni* simply means “birth.”⁵⁶ Metaphorically, *yoni* refers to the 4 modes of birth, that is, the egg-born (*aṇḍa,ja yoni*), the womb-born (*jalābu,ja yoni*),⁵⁷ the moisture-born (*saṃseda,ja yoni*) and the spontaneously born (*opapātika yoni*).⁵⁸

3.1.2.2 Figuratively, *yoni* (in its sense of “source, origin”) is often used in the suttas to mean “cause,” that is, which in most contexts functions as “basis, foundation.” In **the Bhūmija Sutta** (M 126), for example, the Buddha uses a phrase, containing *yoni*, to Bhūmija, telling him that whether we aspire for the noble path or not, we still attain it so long as we keep on practising. “For this, Bhūmija, is the cause for the attainment of the fruit” (*yoni h’esā bhūmija phalassa adhiḡamāya*. M 3:142,13 f). *Yoni*, in this context, takes the figurative senses of “cause, basis, foundation,” giving rise to something else.

The Rathōpama Sutta (S 35.198) lists sense-restraint, moderation in food and wakefulness as the bases or “cause” (*yoni*) for arhathood [§§1-2]. **The (Catukka) Padhāna Sutta** (A 4.71/2:76,24 f), SD 74.12. lists being morally virtuous, greatly learned, assertive and wise as these bases.⁵⁹

The Saṃyutta Subcommentary gives this **etymology of *yoni*** in technical lingo as: “Thus far it bears fruit from this; hence, it is *yoni*, the cause” (*yavati etasmā phalaṃ pasavatīti yoni kāraṇaṃ*, SAṬ:Be 2:-219). Clearly then, *yoni* is used figuratively in the sense of a causative agent. It refers to conditions that bring about, in our examples, a desired wholesome result.

3.1.2.3 The adverb form of *yoni*, ***yoniso*** (BHS *yonisās*), well attested; it means “down to its origin or foundation, from the ground up, fundamentally”; hence, “thoroughly, orderly, properly, judiciously, wisely.”⁶⁰ Its best known usage is in modifying the verbal phrase, *yoniso manasikaroti*, “wisely considers (or minds),”⁶¹ and qualifying the noun phrase, *yoniso,manasikāra*, “wise consideration.”⁶²

It is likely that here, in **the Rathōpama Sutta** (§1), the original reading was the adverb *yoniso*. This is clearly a clue that *yoni*, as used in such contexts, is an ancient form which later is spelt *yoniso* in the texts, highlighting its wholesome sense of “getting down to the bottom or root of things.” [3.2.1.1]

⁵⁴ A 3.16/1:113 (SD 74.11).

⁵⁵ AA 2:18214-16 = MA 2:35,32-34.

⁵⁶ Eg *yoni,pamukha*, “principal birth” (D 1:54; M 1:517), a term used expressing an idea of the sectarian Makkhali Gosāla.

⁵⁷ Cf *yoni,ja*, “womb-born”: Sn 620; Dh 396.

⁵⁸ D 3:230; M 1:73; Miln 146; Vism 552, 557 f; cf VbhA 203 f. See **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12,32-33/1:73), SD 49.1.

⁵⁹ A 4.71/2:76,24 f (SD 74.12).

⁶⁰ *Yoniso* (adv): D 1:118; S 1:203; Pug 25; Vism 30, 132, 559. Opp *ayoniso*, Pug

⁶¹ *Yoniso manasikaroti* (rare): M 1:8,3; It 9; J 1:116; ~*karoto*: M 1:7, 9; S 5:85, 94; Pm 186 passim; Kvu 491, 492; Pug 41. Opp *ayoniso manasikaroto*: M 1:7, 8; S 5:84, 5:93.

⁶² *Yoniso,manasikāra*: A 1:4,4, 14,22, 16,13, 200,27, 5:86,27, 113,16 = 117,1; It 9; J 1:116. Opp *ayoniso,manasikāra*: D 3:273; M 1:7,6 (cf S 5:84,29; A 1:3,6 f, 200,10 f), 1:8,3; VbhA 148; ThaA 79.

3.1.2.4 By definition, *yoniso,manasikāra* always involves some awareness, often profound, even liberating, of **impermanence**, that is, of the rising and falling (*udaya,vaya* or *udaya-b,baya*) of phenomena. Hence, commenting on the elder Nanda’s verse (Tha 158):

<p><i>Upaya,kusalenāharṃ</i> <i>buddehen’ādicca,bandhunā</i> <i>yoniso paṭipajjitvā</i> <i>bhave cittaṃ udabbahin’ti</i></p>	<p>Tha 158</p>	<p>Through the wholesome use of skilful means by the Buddha, kinsman of the sun, I, having wisely practised plucked out the mind for existence</p>
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the commentator Dhammapāla explains *yoniso* (Tha 158c) a meaning “just by the right knowledge of rising and falling through calm and insight” (*udaya,vayena ñāṇena samma-d-eva samatha,vipassanāya*, ThaA 2:33,23 f).

This means that he first clears his mind of the mental hindrances so that he attains dhyana. Such a mind is free from craving, at least momentarily. Then, emerging from that dhyana (that is, *samatha*), with a mind still profoundly focused, he directs it to seeing the impermanence of all things, which then clearly and fully arises in him as liberating insight wisdom (*vipassanā*).⁶³

3.2 YONI UPAPARIKKHITABBA, YONISO UPAPARIKKHATI

3.2.1 The Atta,dīpa Sutta

3.2.1.1 The unique phrase *yonī upaparikkhitabbo* [3.2.1.2] occurs only in **the Atta,dīpa Sutta** (S 22.-43), the discourse on self as an island.⁶⁴ Firstly and clearly, we should translate *dīpa* as “island,” not as “lamp,” as often done in the Chinese translations. Even the Sanskrit phrase. In fact, “island” fits very well as metaphor of self-reliance and the meditator becoming an island above the floods of mental influxes (sensual desires, existence, views and ignorance).⁶⁵

It is also rare to see the phrase *yonī upaparikkhitabbā*—that is, with the word *yonī*, rather than the better known *yoniso*, as found in all the other 5 suttas with the same theme [3.2.1.2]. From the argument that “the harder reading is more likely” (*lectio difficilior potior*),⁶⁶ we may safely surmise that the phrase —*yonī upaparikkhitabbā*—is not only correct but is probably older than those expressions using *yoniso* [3.1.2.3]. In other words, the Atta,dīpa Sutta (S 22.43) is a very ancient one.⁶⁷

3.2.1.2 The phrase, *yonī upaparikkhitabbo* can be translated here in 2 ways:

- (1) *yonī* as a noun meaning “basis”: “the basis should be investigated”; or
- (2) *yonī* as a adverb meaning “wisely”: “it should be wisely investigated.”

Considering the propensity for polysemy in Pali, we should understand and accept that *both* senses apply to the same phrase. Even though, we conveniently translate *yonī upaparikkhitabbo* as “one should wisely

⁶³ On how *samatha* and *vipassana* work together, see **Samatha & vipassanā**, SD 41.1, esp (4.2.3(4)).

⁶⁴ S 22.43/3:42,12 (SD 93.8).

⁶⁵ SD 3.1 (3.3). On the 4 floods, see **Ogha Pañha S** (S 38.11), SD 30.3(1.4) + (1.4.2).

⁶⁶ SD 54.6 (2.3.3.2).

⁶⁷ Or, if the sutta were expanded over time, the passage with the *yonī upaparikkhitabbo* is likely to belong to an older stratum.

consider (impermanence),” we should always bear in mind that “wisely” here is *pregnant* with both the senses of *yoni* (above).⁶⁸

This “polysemic persistence” of Pali means that we should understand *both* the well known expressions, *yoniso,manasikaroti*, “to wisely consider or attend (to)” and its noun, *yoniso manasikāra*, “wise consideration (or attention),” as referring to the action of fully and properly directing our attention to seeing the true nature of impermanence in its various nuances (such as rising and falling), and thus going down into the roots, the fundamental and universal nature of being and existence. The full understanding of this is the basis (*yoni*) for awakening, beginning with streamwinning.

3.2.1.3 There are at least 6 suttas centering on the phrase, “Dwell with yourselves as an island” (*atta,dīpānam viharatha*).⁶⁹ All of them present the Buddha as using this phrase to exhort us to practise the 4 satipatthanas: meditations based on the body, on feelings, in the mind and on mental realities.⁷⁰ Of these, only the **Atta,dīpa Sutta** (S 22.43) present the key teaching as that of the 3 characteristics of the 5 aggregates.

3.2.1.4 The Atta,dīpa Sutta (S 22.43) teaching is the reflection on impermanence, serving as the basis for knowing and seeing the 3 characteristics of the 5 aggregates (below). The teaching, abridged, is given as follows:

THE IGNORANT. “Bhikshus, dwell as an island unto yourselves, be a refuge unto yourself, with no other refuge, with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as your refuge, with no other refuge.”

(Having dwelled in this manner,) the basis itself should be examined,⁷¹ thus:

“From what are sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and despair born? How are they produced?”

Those ignorant of the Dharma, identify with (one or other of the 5 aggregates:) **form ... feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness ... as self, or self as possessing this aggregate, or this aggregate as in self, or self as in this aggregate.**⁷²

With the change, becoming other, of this aggregate, “there arise in him sorrow ... despair.”

THE WISE. But when one has understood the impermanence of **form ... feeling ... perception ... formations ... consciousness ...**, its change, fading away and ending, and when one sees, as it really is, with right wisdom, thus:

“In the past and now, too, all **form ... feeling ... perception ... formations (are) ... consciousness** is impermanent, unsatisfactory, subject to change, then, sorrow, ... despair are abandoned.

With their abandonment, one does not become agitated.

Unagitated, one dwells happily.

A monk (practitioner) who dwells happily is said to be quenched in that respect.”

(S 22.43/3:42 f), SD 94.8

⁶⁸ On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2; 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4).

⁶⁹ **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,2.26/2:100), SD 9.1; **Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda S** (D 26,1.2/3:58 = 27/3:77), SD 36.10; **Atta,dīpa S** (S 22.43/3:42), SD 93.8; **(Bhagavā) Gilāna S** (S 47.9/5:154); **(Satipaṭṭhāna) Cunda S** (S 47.13/5:163); **Ukka,celā S** (S 47.14/5:164 f).

⁷⁰ Respectively: *kāyānupassanā*, *vedanā'nupassanā*, *cittānupassana*, *dhammā'ganupassanā*. See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3), SD 13.3.

⁷¹ *Yoni yeva upaparikkhiyabbo*.

⁷² On these 4 self-views, see SD 2.16 (15), details (15.2.1).

3.2.2 The Phena,piṇḍa Sutta

The **Phena,piṇḍa Sutta** (S 22.95) uses the phrase “wisely investigates” (*yoniso upaparikkhati*) a total of 19 times.⁷³ This verbal clause is synonymous with *yoniso manasikaroti*, “wisely considers,” that is, to reflect on the impermanence of all phenomena [3.1.2.3]. This Sutta serves as a guide for our practice in the reflection on impermanence, which, properly and habitually done, will bring us streamwinning in this life itself.⁷⁴

4 Related teachings leading to the path

4.1 TEACHINGS ON THE CONDITION FOR NON-DECLINE

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Conditions for non-decline (<i>aparihānāya dhamma</i>) ⁷⁵	not delighting in work (<i>na kamm'ārāmata</i>)	not delighting in talk (<i>na bhass'ārāmata</i>)	not delighting in sleep (<i>na nidd'ārāmata</i>)	not delighting in company (<i>na saṅgaṇīkr'āmata</i>)	restraint of the sense-doors (<i>indriyesu gutta, dvāratā</i>)	moderation in food (<i>bhojane mattaññūtā</i>)	not delighting in intimacy (<i>asamsagg'ārāmata</i>)	not delighting in mental proliferation (<i>nippapañcā'ārāmata</i>)
1	Saṅgīti Sutta (D 33,1.9(20))					√	√		
2	Samāpatti Vg (A 2.169/1:94)					√	√		
3	Dhamma,saṅgānī (Dhs 7)					√	√		
4	Rathôpama Sutta (S 35.198)			(√)		√	√		
5	Samaya,vimutta Sutta 2 (A 5.150/3:173)	√	√	√		√	√		
6	(Chakka) Sekha Sutta (A 6.31/3:330)	√	√	√	√	√	√		
7	(Sattaka) Sekha Sutta (A 7.28/4:24) ⁷⁶	√	√	√	√	√	√		
8	(Aṭṭhaka) Parihāna Sutta (A 8.79/4:331)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 4.1. A collation of teachings on the conditions on non-decline

⁷³ S 22.95 (SD 17.12).

⁷⁴ See eg (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD16.7.

⁷⁵ For (1)-(3), the conditions are those for non-decline of temporary freedom (*samaya,vimuttassa aarahānāya*) [4.2.1.3]. For (4)-(7), the conditions are those for non-decline of a learner (*sekhasa aparihānāya*).

⁷⁶ The 7th condition for decline here: the monk takes sangha matters into his own hands, disregarding the elders. (A 4:24). See SD 54.3f (2.2.5).

4.1.1 Not delighting in sleep and wakefulness

4.1.1.1 The teachings of **the Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) are: sense-restraint, moderation in food and devotion to wakefulness [S2]—practices that lead us to the path. The rest of the Sutta defines this triad, illustrating the 1st with the parable of the chariot [1.2.2]. As we have already noted [1.1], these 3 qualities that bring a Dharma practitioner happiness in this life itself, and that is the start of the path of awakening leading to arhathood.

4.1.1.2 Of the Rathôpama Sutta’s 3 conditions, **devotion to wakefulness** is unique, listed in 4 of the longer lists as “not delighting in sleep.” The two are probably synonymous. The former is positively stated, while the latter negatively (apophatically) [4.1.2]. Either way, it is not that sleep is unwholesome but rather that keeping oneself alert, mindful and diligent in our spiritual practice expedites our journey to the path of awakening.

4.1.1.3 It is worthwhile noting the Buddha’s teachings in **the Pacalā Sutta** (A 7.58) to Moggallāna when he is troubled by drowsiness during his meditation before he is awakened. The Buddha teaches him 8 methods of dealing with drowsiness: (1) note the mental sign of sleepiness; (2) reflect on a Dharma teaching; (3) recite a teaching (sutta) in detail; (4) massage one’s ears and limbs; (5) look around and up at the star-light; (6) do the perception of light; (7) do walking meditation. However, when all this fails, says the Buddha, (8) one should mindfully rest or sleep, keeping in mind the time for rising.⁷⁷

4.1.2 Decline and progress

The Rathôpama Sutta triad are part of a network of teachings dealing with **spiritual decline** and **spiritual progress** (to the path and up the path). The lists put together in Table 4.1 are those of the conditions of non-decline, which is a synonym for “spiritual progress.” The apophatic (negative)⁷⁸ terminology reflects the *oral* nature of early Buddhist teachings: spiritual training begins with what we should not do—the morality of omission—like clearing the ground for a good foundation of a strong building.

4.1.3 Basic sets

4.1.3.1 The triad of **sense-restraint**, **moderation in food** and **devotion to wakefulness**—as laid out in **the Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) serves as a starting point for the basic training for neophytes and the bases or grounding for continued practice. These are like subject-headings onto which a skilled teacher would link other related teachings—that is, the 8 conditions for non-decline given in **the (Aṭṭhaka) Parihāna Sutta** (A 8.79)—depending on the needs and readiness of the students.

4.1.3.2 In fact, we have an even shorter list, a duad of only **restraint of the sense-doors** (or “sense-restraint” for short) and **moderation in food**, tersely listed in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33), **the Samāpatti Vagga** of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, and **the Dhamma,saṅgāṇī** (Dhs 7) of the Abhidhamma. This suggests that we (or the Dharma teacher) should already know or should look up these teachings and connected ones that will effectively benefit us and the students.

Note that in this duad, **moderation in food** deals with the physical and social aspects—especially by way of the 4 kinds of food [2]; and **sense-restraint** covers all the *mental aspects* of the beginner’s train-

⁷⁷ A 7.58/4:85-88 (SD 4.11).

⁷⁸ On apophasis in early Buddhism, see SD 40a.1 (6.3).

ing. The brevity of the duad signifies that it forms the start of the teaching, which, over time, increases in the number of teaching components in related sets from the list in Table 4.1.

4.2 LONGER TEACHING SETS

4.2.1 Conditions for non-decline of temporary freedom

4.2.1.1 The Samaya,vimutta Sutta 2 (A 5.150) lists the 5 conditions for **non-decline of temporary freedom** (*samaya.vimuttassa aparihānāya*): (1) not delighting in work (that distracts him from his spiritual practice), (2) not delighting in talk, (3) not delighting in sleep, (4) restraint of the sense-doors, and (5) moderation in food.⁷⁹ Note that the underscored items are the same as the triad of **the Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) [4.1.1.1; 1.2].

4.2.1.2 In the Samaya,vimutta Sutta 2 pentad, we can see that

- (3) not delighting in sleep = devotion to wakefulness of the Rathôpama Sutta;
- (1) not delighting in work, and (2) not delighting in talk, are elaborations of restraint of the sense-doors of the Rathôpama Sutta.

Hence, both these Suttas teach the same things, but we can see the former as elaborating on the teachings of the latter.

4.2.1.3 The Samaya,vimutta Sutta 2 pentad [4.2.1.1] are the conditions for non-decline of temporary freedom. Temporary freedom refers to mundane meditative attainments (*lokiya samāpatti*), that is, any of the 4 dhyanas (*jhāna*) or the formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*). They are so called because the mind has momentarily abandoned (*tad-aññiga pahāna*) its opposing mental hindrances and is resolved (focused) upon its object.⁸⁰

In other words, these 5 conditions--not delighting in work, not delighting in talk, not delighting in sleep, sense-restraint, and moderation in food—are conducive to our attaining and sustaining any of the 8 kinds of attainments. They help the mind free itself from the body and to focus on itself bringing total calm and profound joy—they help in our training in higher concentration (*adhicitta sikkhā*).⁸¹

4.2.2 A learner's conditions for non-decline

4.2.2.1 The (Chakka) Sekha Sutta (A 6.31) lists the 6 conditions for **non-decline of a learner** (*sekha*): (1) not delighting in work, (2) not delighting in talk, (3) not delighting in sleep, (4) not delighting in company, (5) restraint of the sense-doors, and (6) moderation in food. The underscored items in the list are the same as the triad of **the Rathôpama Sutta** (S 35.198) [4.1.1.1; 1.2].

These 6 conditions are those for the progress of a learner—a saint of the path short of an arhat-become. Now, none of these saints will ever backslide; however, even when such a learner were to delight in work, in talk, in sleep, or in company, unrestrained in the senses, and lack moderation in food, he would never break the moral precepts. He would simply remain in stasis, as it were. When these six conditions are present, he will resume his progress on the path of awakening.

⁷⁹ A 5.150/3:173.

⁸⁰ SD 4.25 (2.1.2.3).

⁸¹ On the 3 higher training, see **Vitakka Sañṭhāna S** (M 20,2), SD 1.6.

Note that 2 items—(7) not delighting in intimacy (neither breaking the precept against sexual misconduct⁸² nor indulging in the bonds of sexuality⁸³) and (8) not delighting in mental proliferation (not troubled by thoughts or views)—are unlisted. However, (7) is subsumed under (4) not delighting in company, and (8) is partly subsumed under (2) not delighting in talk. The learner (a streamwinner etc) will never deliberately break even the 5 precepts (including the 3rd precept), and whatever views that may arise in his mind he is somehow able to wholesomely deal with them according to his level of spiritual ability—which is well beyond that of the ordinary worldling.⁸⁴

4.2.2.2 The (Sattaka) Sekha Sutta (A 7.28) lists the 7 conditions for non-decline of a learner (*sekha*): (1) not delighting in work, (2) not delighting in talk, (3) not delighting in sleep, (4) not delighting in company, (5) restraint of the sense-doors, (6) moderation in food, and (7) as a monastic, he will never take sangha matters into his own hands, disregarding the elders. These conditions—like those of **the (Chakka) Sekha Sutta** [4.2.2.1]—will expedite his progress on the path of awakening.

However, this heptad is unique, since the last item, (7) seems unlisted elsewhere. While **The (Chakka) Sekha Sutta** sextet [4.2.2.1] refers to the qualities of learners who may be monastic or lay, this heptad is clearly that of a monastic learner. As a monastic learner—bound by the Vinaya—will never insubordinate the sangha elders. Like the arhat Ānanda during his “trial” before the 1st council, the monastic learner will show every respect for the sangha.⁸⁵

4.2.2.3 The (Aṭṭhaka) Parihāna Sutta (A 8.79) lists the 8 conditions for non-decline of a learner (*sekha*): (1) not delighting in work, (2) not delighting in talk, (3) not delighting in sleep, (4) not delighting in company, (5) restraint of the sense-doors, (6) moderation in food, (7) not delighting in intimacy, and (8) not delighting in mental proliferation. In practical terms, this octet work in the same manner as the preceding 2 [4.2.2.1, 4.2.2.2]—these are the qualities of a learner. The only difference is that here the octet is complete. The learner will never delight in work (that distracts him from his spiritual practice), in talk, in sleep or in company; his senses will be restrained; he is moderate in eating; he delights neither in intimacy nor in mental proliferation. He is clearly progressing on the path of awakening.⁸⁶

4.3 OTHER RELATED SUTTAS

The following suttas similarly deal with **spiritual progress** (non-decline) and **spiritual decline**, but *without* mention of conditions (5)+(6):

(1) (Iti) Parihāna Sutta	(It 79)	3 conditions for decline of learners	SD 54.3f (2.2.1)
(2) (Pañcaka) Sekha Sutta 1	(A 5.89)	5 conditions for progress of learners	SD 54.3f (2.2.2)
(3) Sāmaka Sutta	(A 6.21)	6 conditions for decline of a monk	SD 54.3f (2.2.3)
(4) Bhaddaka Sutta	(A 6.14)	6 conditions for a “good death”	SD 54.3f (2.2.4)
(5) (Dasaka) Aññā Sutta	(A 10.86)	10 conditions for spiritual growth	SD 54.3f (2.2.6)

— — —

⁸² On sexual misconduct, see SD 31.7 esp (4.2).

⁸³ On the bonds of sexuality (*methuna, saṃyoga*), see **Methuna S** (A 7.47) + SD 21.9 (1); SD 31.7 (2.3).

⁸⁴ A 6.31/3:330.

⁸⁵ A 7.28/4:24. On (7) see SD 54.3f (2.2.5).

⁸⁶ A 8.79/4:331.

Rathôpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Parable of the Chariot

S 35.198

Setting out on the path to arhathood

1 [3] “Bhikshus, by possessing 3 qualities, a monk lives full of happiness and joy in this very life, and has initiated [effected] the cause⁸⁷ for the destruction of the influxes.⁸⁸

What are the three?

2 He is one⁸⁹

who **guards the sense-doors**,

who is **moderate in eating**, and

who is **devoted to wakefulness**. [176]

*indriyesu gutta, dvāro hoti*⁹⁰ [§§3-6]

bhōjane mattaññū [§§7-8]

jāgariyam anuyuttam [§§9-10]

(1) Sense-restraint

3 [4] And how, bhikshus, is a monk **one who guards the sense-doors**?⁹¹

⁹²(1) Here, bhikshus, a monk, having seen a form with the eye, he grasps neither its sign nor its details.⁹³

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure⁹⁴ may overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

⁸⁷ *Yoni c' assa āradhā hoti āsavānam khayāya*: see (3) esp (3.1).

⁸⁸ *Tīhi bhikkhave dhammehi samannāgato bhikkhu diṭṭh'eva dhamme sukha, somanassa, bahulo viharati, yoni c' assa āradhā hoti āsavānam khayāya*. The ancient texts list the 3 influxes (*āsava*) of sense-desire, existence and ignorance. The better-known later set gives 4 influxes, with the addition of “the influx of views” (*diṭṭh'āsava*) as no. 3. The term “the destruction of the influxes” (*āsavānam khaya*) refers to the attaining of arhathood or awakening; an arhat is said to be “one with influxes destroyed” (*āsava-k, khaya*) (AA 3:106,19): see SD 55.9 (1.3.2.5).

⁸⁹ On the broader significance of this triad, see (4.1+2). On related teachings, see (4.3).

⁹⁰ This expression and the foll 2, as technical terms (nouns), are *indriyesu gutta, dvaratā* (D 3:123) or *indriya, samvara* (D 1:70,21, 182,8 = M 1:181,2+10 = 269,14+22 -346,22+31 etc; S 1:54,3*; A 3:138,23), *bhōjane mattaññūtā* (D 3:213,7; S 2:218,19; A 1:113,17), *jāgariyānuyoga* (D 3:107,2; A 4:168,9; Pm 2:199,2; Vbh 244,7; Kvu 616,7. For related teachings, see (3).

⁹¹ *Kathañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhu indriyesu gutta, dvāro hoti*. For explanations, see (1.2.1).

⁹² On *na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g, gāhī*, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at any detail (feature).” Comys say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda, rāga, vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi, matta, vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuyyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by mentally grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of **nimitta**, see SD 13 §3.1a.

⁹³ For details, see **Nimitta & anuyyañjana**, SD 19.14.

⁹⁴ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassam*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first 2 hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the 5 hindrances. Cf M 39,13/1:274; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,36) on how to deal with the hindrances in our meditation. The meditator effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of

He practises the restraint of it.⁹⁵ He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty.⁹⁶ He devotes himself to restraint in the eye-faculty.⁹⁷

(2) Having heard a sound with **the ear**, he grasps neither its sign nor its details.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the ear-faculty. He devotes himself to restraint in the ear-faculty.

(3) Having smelt an odour with **the nose**, he grasps neither its sign nor its details.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the nose-faculty. He devotes himself to restraint in the nose-faculty.

(4) Having tasted a taste with **the tongue**, he grasps neither its sign nor its details.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the tongue-faculty. He devotes himself to restraint in the tongue-faculty.

(5) Having felt a tactile object with **the body**, he grasps neither its sign nor its details.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the body-faculty. He devotes himself to restraint in the body-faculty.

(6) Having known a mental phenomenon with **the mind**, he grasps neither its sign nor its details.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him, to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty. He devotes himself to restraint in the mind-faculty.

The parable of the chariot⁹⁸

4 [5] Suppose, bhikshus, there were **a chariot on good level ground at a crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, with a whip on a slant (in the holder) at the ready, so that a skilled charioteer, a trainer**

impermanence, of fading away (of lust), of cessation (of suffering) and of letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On **abhijjhā, domanassa**, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb'eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101): "Bhikshus, before my awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... 'Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantage (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world'." (A 3.101/1:258)

⁹⁵ *Tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati.*

⁹⁶ *Rakkhati cakkhu'ndriyaṃ.*

⁹⁷ *Cakkhu'ndriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati.*

⁹⁸ On the parable, see (1.2.2).

of tamable horses, might mount and, taking the reins in his left hand and the whip in his right, drive out and back, to whatever place and by whichever road he likes.⁹⁹

5 Even so, bhikshus, a monk trains in guarding these 6 sense-faculties, trains in restraining them, trains in taming them, trains in stilling them.¹⁰⁰

6 It is in this way, bhikshus, that a monk guards the sense-doors.

(2) Moderation in food

7 [6] And how, bhikshus, is a monk **moderate in eating**?¹⁰¹

Here, bhikshus, a monk wisely reflecting,¹⁰² a monk uses almsfood, not for amusement,¹⁰³ not for intoxication, not for fattening, not for beautifying, but only for keeping this body going and enduring, for ending hunger pangs,¹⁰⁴ for the sake of supporting the holy life,¹⁰⁵ considering, ‘Thus I shall get rid of an old feeling, and not let a new feeling arise, and so that I will be healthy and blameless, and live at ease.’¹⁰⁶ [177]

8 [7] Bhikshus, just as a person **anoints a wound only for the sake of letting it heal**,¹⁰⁷ or just as one greases an axle only for the sake of bearing a load,¹⁰⁸

even so, bhikshus, *a monk wisely reflecting, a monk uses almsfood, not for amusement, not for intoxication,*

not for fattening, not for beautifying,

but only for keeping this body going and enduring,

for ending hunger pangs, for the sake of supporting the holy life,

considering, ‘Thus I shall get rid of an old feeling, and not let a new feeling arise, and so that I will be healthy and blameless, and live at ease.’

It is in this way, bhikshus, that a monk is moderate in eating.¹⁰⁹

⁹⁹ *Seyyathāpi bhikkhave subhūmiyaṃ cātum, mahā, pathe ājañña, ratho yutto assa ṭhito odhastā, patodo, tam enaṃ dakkho yogg’ācariyo assa, damma, sārathi abhiruhitvā vāmena haṭṭhena rasmiyo gahetvā dakkhiṇena haṭṭhena patodaṃ gahetvā yen’icchakaṃ, yad icchakaṃ sāreyya pi paccāsāreyya pi. Paccāsāreyya is opt of paccāsāreti (paṭi + ā + sāreti, caus of √SR, to flow), to make go (or turn) backward (M 1:124 = A 3:28 = Comy: paṭinivatteti): see PED, svv paccāsāreti & paṭinivattati. Parable occurs in **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,7.5/1:124), SD 38.1; **Kāya, gata, sati S** (M 119,31/3:97,6-10), SD 12.21; **Rathōpama S** (S 35.198/4:176), SD 55.14; (**Samādhi**) **Pañc’āṅgika S** (A 5.28,14/3:28), SD 33.13. Cf a similar parable, that of the earth-mound at the crossroads: **Kimbila S** (S 54.10,22/5:325), SD 12.22.*

¹⁰⁰ *Evam eva kho bhikkhave bhikkhu imesaṃ channaṃ indriyānaṃ ārakkhāya sikkhati, saṃyamāya sikkhati, damāya sikkhati, upasamāya sikkhati.*

¹⁰¹ *Kathaṇ ca bhikkhave bhikkhu bhōjane mattaññū hoti.* For explanations, see (1.2.3).

¹⁰² For a similar instruction, see **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39,9/1:273), SD 101.13). For an instruction to the layman Mahānāma, see **Sekha S** (M 53,9/1:355), SD 21.14.

¹⁰³ This stock: M 1:355; A 2:40, 145; Dhs 1346; Pug 21; Vbh 249.

¹⁰⁴ Vism 1.92/32.

¹⁰⁵ This passage and the foll: (M 2,14), SD 30.3. Buddhaghosa distinguishes 2 kinds of holy life (*brahma, cariya*): the teaching (*sāsana*) as a whole, and the holy life of the path (*magga brahma, cariya*), ie sainthood (Vism 1.92/32).

¹⁰⁶ “Live at ease” (*phāsu, vihāra*) refers to bodily ease or comfort, free from pain and distraction, so that we could direct our mind to meditation.

¹⁰⁷ This and the foll line: *seyyathāpi bhikkhave puriso vaṇaṃ ālimpeyya yāvad eva ropan’atthāya* (so Ce Ee; Be *rohana-*; Se *sevana-*) | *seyyathā vā pana akkhaṃ abbhāñjeyya yāvad eva bhārassa nittharan’atthāya.*

¹⁰⁸ In this connection, see the powerful parable of the only son’s flesh, see **Putta, maṃsa S** (S 12.63,4-11), SD 20.6.

¹⁰⁹ On the 4 kinds of food and how they are moderated, see (2).

(3) Devotion to wakefulness

9 [8] And how, bhikshus, is a monk **devoted to wakefulness**?¹¹⁰

And here, bhikshus, during the day, while walking back and forth, while sitting, a monk purifies his mind of hindering states.¹¹¹

10 Bhikshus, in the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth, while sitting, he purifies his mind of hindering states.

In the middle watch of the night, he lies down on his right side in the lion-posture, with one leg resting on the other, mindful and fully aware, after mentally noting the time for rising.¹¹²

After rising, in the last watch of the night, while walking back and forth, while sitting, he purifies his mind of hindering states.

It is in this way, bhikshus, that a monk is devoted to wakefulness.

11 [9] Bhikshus, by possessing these 3 qualities, a monk lives full of happiness and joy in this very life, and has laid the cause for the destruction of the influxes.”

— evaṃ —

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¹¹⁰ *Kathaṇ ca bhikkhave bhikkhu jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti.* For explanations, see (1.2.4).

¹¹¹ *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu divasaṃ caṅkamaṇa nisajjāya āvaraṇīyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodheti.*

¹¹² *Rattiyā majjhimam yāmaṃ dakkhiṇena passena sīha, seyyam kappeti pāde pādam accādhāya sato sampajāno uṭṭhāna, saññaṃ manasi karitvā.* “After mentally noting the time for rising,” *uṭṭhāna, saññaṃ manasi karitvā*, see n at **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,4.14/2:135, 16,1/2:137), SD 9 (§§4.40, 5.1); also **D 33/3:209**; **M 39,10/1:274**, **53,5 +10-/1:354 f**; **S 4.7/1:107**, **4.12/14:110 f** (Buddha resting), **35.120/4:105**, **35.239/4:177**, **35.243/4:184**; **A 3.16/1:114**, **4.23/2:40**, **4.58,9/4:87**, **8.9,4/4:168**, **10.67,1/5:123**, **10.68,1/5:126**; **U 8.5/84**. On “sleeping mindfully,” see **Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8(7)/1:57). In **Pacalā S** (A 7.58), the Buddha exhorts, “Moggallāna, mindful and fully aware, you should lie down lion-like on your right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the thought that on awakening, you would get up quickly, thinking, ‘I will dwell without indulging in the pleasure of sleep, or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness’” (*na seyya, dukhaṃ na passa, sukhaṃ na middha, sukhaṃ anuyutto*) (A 7.58-/4:87), SD 4.11.